

## Star Gate 57

### Chapter 57: The Calm Before the Storm (II)

Li Hao had already sensed that his heart, mind, and other major areas were sealed away. What if there were other locks in his body? The light of envy dawned in his eyes.

Inherent Starlight! How lucky, how nice that must be!

Although innate Starlight was just Slayer of Tens, they were still supernatural with limitless potential. Martial masters paled in comparison as they were capped at Dominator of Thousands in present day society.

“That’s enough, chief, what are you talking like that for? Are you trying to shatter Little Hao Hao’s confidence?” Liu Yan smiled radiantly. “Little Hao Hao is talented enough already—to think that the bait we dragged into our fold is a genius! Big sis isn’t willing to let you be bait anymore!”

Li Hao chuckled drily. Seriously, what could he do about this one? One did not hit a smiling face, not to mention that he wouldn’t win in a fight!

“Li Hao, although you seem to have improved again,” the quiet Yun Yao suddenly spoke up. “I have to remind you that your constitution is getting stronger and stronger. If this continues and you fail to become Starlight after a few more tries, you’ll end up following in Brother Liu and your teacher’s footsteps!”

Everyone blinked—the merry Liu Long snapped out of his joy and frowned at Li Hao.

“I forgot about this. Li Hao... you... should make the crossover as soon as possible! The end of the road is nigh for martial masters!”

He was reluctant, yet had to admit that there was no future for martial masters. Dominators hadn't appeared for many years and there weren't even many Sunderers in Silver Moon. Sunderers were only the equivalent of Darkmoon. How many of those existed?

While there wasn't a specific number, they outnumbered martial masters by at least tenfold! Even he himself, the deputy chief of the Inspectorate, toiled to become supernatural and not a Dominator of Thousands.

There was no light at the end of the martial master tunnel. A practitioner of martial dao for decades, Liu Long regretted having to forsake his path. And yet, how many more years would it take to reach Dominator if he didn't pursue the supernatural?

Ten or twenty years if all went well? What if it took the rest of his life?

If he ascended to the other side, he could instantly be Sunflare—the equivalent of a Dominator.

The man sighed again, suddenly finding Li Hao's blood transfusion not necessarily a good thing. A stronger physique meant a more difficult crossover, such was the rule.

Li Hao, however, didn't care. He didn't feel kindly toward supernaturals and looked much more favorably upon martial masters. His teacher was a martial master and Captain Liu Long was a martial master. Although the latter wanted him to be bait, the man had also given him substantial presents. The deputy chief also protected him—martial masters were wonderful! The rest of the team were also martial masters—they were the best!

As for the dying path of martial cultivation, Dominator of Thousands was the limit. Having broken through to Slayer of Tens as soon as he set foot on the path, Li Hao didn't think there was anything bad about it as he was far removed from Dominator. Neither did he feel that martial masters were any way worse than supernaturals.

He couldn't empathize with Liu Long's despair. The young man had also seen a true Dominator in action—that caliber of strength was incredible! Thus, his response demonstrated his youth.

“Chief, what’s so bad about martial masters? Is the supernatural really that strong? My teacher punched the lights out of two Darkmoon with one move!”

Liu Long laughed wordlessly—ah, to be young again!

“I don’t have a good impression of supernaturals!” Li Hao continued. That group had killed his friends and possibly even his parents. They were also probably responsible for many of the cases that he’d sorted through.

Those who lacked the psyche and mental fortitude necessary for their newfound strength easily diverted onto a deviant path. Martial masters, however, were different!

They toiled for every step of progress. Of the Demon Hunters, the most experienced had cultivated for several decades and the least had at least eight years under their belt. Even Li Hao was three years into his practice.

Meanwhile, Heaven Favored might be supernatural at just a few years old and wield the strength of a Slayer. An inflated sense of self worth seemed inevitable for one who could easily kill dozens of soldiers at a young age

“Development commenced in the supernatural field only twenty years ago, which is also the maximum tenure for its earliest batch. Twenty years to develop the next generation of supernaturals means that many of them lack a basic comprehension of humanity!

“Martial masters conduct a holistic review to see if students are worthy of inheriting the master’s legacy. But for the supernatural side, I think they only look at talent. They only care about inducting energy and nothing else.” Li Hao had gleaned a thing or two about the supernatural selection from Wang Ming—it was pure assessment of genius and nothing else!

One could be a criminal, but still find supernatural organizations willing to provide shelter. All could be overlooked so long as one becomes larger than life!

Liu Long smiled, but didn't say anything. It was Liu Yan whose dimples deepened eerily; she grinned so brilliantly that even the young man found something amiss.

"Little Hao Hao is very correct!" Liu Yan's smile was almost a leer. "Twenty years ago, even martial masters were taken to task if they committed a crime. The death sentence was carried out whenever deemed proper. So what if the accused was a mighty martial master? A wrongdoer was a wrongdoer!"

"But now, certain supernatural organizations recruit such criminals and transgressors in large numbers! They find that criminals possess the requisite focus and are less afraid of death. They're more reckless and willing to conduct mysterious power into their bodies. It has resulted in overwhelming numbers of convicted supernaturals in these organizations!"

"Or, it might be that it doesn't matter if you've killed someone. So long as you successfully cross over and don't join the Night Watchers, there is an organization willing to harbor you and shield you from the rest of the world!" Liu Yan grew more agitated as she spoke and sneered through clenched teeth. "They aid and abet lawbreakers, yet happily enjoy the taste of freedom. Not even the Night Watchers can do anything about it!"

"Although Night Watchers are on the side of good, they struggle with too many restrictions and cannot silence the world. They must take the route of compromise and permit certain organizations to go unchecked in exchange for the latter's support. So long as these organizations are not too far over the line, they will not be held accountable for their actions. However, that serves to embolden certain people!"

It was Li Hao's first time hearing of such analysis and inside knowledge. It was both surprising and perfectly reasonable.

"Mortal hot weapons lose their deterrence once a person's strength surpasses mundane limits. This kind of disorder we see is only natural if a governmental organization like the Night Watchers cannot subdue all sides!" Liu Yan sneered. "Therefore, we must become supernatural if we wish to break the restrictions of the ordinary. Remember this, Li Hao—you will be fine if you break the law, so long as you are supernatural! The Night Watchers will ignore small transgressions and if you commit a large one, just join the other organizations for a good life!"

“Nuh uh, Sis Liu.” Li Hao shook his head with a smile. “I’m different from them. I’ve received higher education and been part of the Inspectorate for a year. No matter how you slice it, I’m on the side of good and justice. Those who have fallen to depravity are on the side of evil. How can you view me through the same lens?”

“The more highly educated you are, the easier it is to deviate onto the wrong path!” Liu Yan snorted.

Well then, I have nothing to say. Not to mention, it wasn’t set in stone that he could make the crossover in the future. Li Hao dropped the conversation and the six walked out of the treasury.

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As Li Hao’s strength increased, so did his confidence and assurance in things to come. He piped up with a question as the team walked.

“Chief, do we have any plans for the killer behind the self-immolation cases?”

He would’ve never asked before and Liu Long wouldn’t have answered. But now, the team captain thought for a bit.

“The plan is simple—lure them out of hiding and make them suffer from their own scheme! Hot weapons will be the main offensive force. We’ll lay mines and spray a few rounds with machine guns. The enemy will outright die if they’re weak or be injured if they’re strong. That will create the perfect opening!”

“They can’t possibly be unaware of this possibility.” Li Hao frowned. “I even suspect that they have moles in the law enforcement team. They’ll understand the might of hot weapons and you’re already exposed, chief, because they followed me before! They likely know about the Demon Hunters and probably even how many supernaturals you’ve killed...”

Was Liu Long overconfident? Although Li Hao's trump card was his teacher, he didn't want massive casualties to result from the team's carelessness. There were only so many of them left.

"I know." A smiling Liu Long nodded. "There are some additional preparations in the works too, but it's not good for you to know too much. Just know that there are other details in addition to this!"

"Your mission is simple—find a way to lure them to our predesignated spot when the rains come. All you need to do afterward is wait for them to set foot into the trap!"

Li Hao started to speak, then stopped.

"Do you think it's dangerous?" chuckled the deputy chief.

"A little."

"Unfortunately, this is it," Liu Long continued chuckling. "Do you have any better ideas? I'd love to suppress the enemy by force and kill them that way, but we lack sufficient strength. We can't even pin down their movements for an ambush, so we might as well opt for a more straightforward way. If they want to kill you, they must step into a snare."

He waved to the others. "You guys go first, I have some words for Li Hao."

The rest of the team left without question.

"Liu Yan..." sighed the captain when the rest were far away. "You saw for yourself just now. She was once married—a supernatural killed her husband. There was no recourse for her as the murderer joined a supernatural organization. The Night Watchers could only pretend ignorance and drop the issue, which is why she was agitated."

I see! No... wonder...

“I tell you this only to say that it’s against her will that she’s out of control and sometimes impossible to understand. She’s the most fearless of us in the field and even I pale in comparison when she goes berserk. She didn’t join the Demon Hunters with much thought other than to become supernatural and hunt down her husband’s murderer. Sadly, she is yet to succeed...”

Liu Long decided to give a brief overview of Liu Yan’s background because the madwoman had fixated on Li Hao. He didn’t wish the young man to form a bad impression.

“She hounds you not because she really wants to start anything with you,” Liu Long laughed. “She’s very enthusiastic to all newcomers because she hopes that they can make the crossover. To put things crudely, she might really be willing to do anything you want if you can ascend. Her only goal is revenge!

“I give the same talk to every newcomer so they won’t refuse to own their debt if they take advantage of her. She bears a blood feud on her shoulders and is a rose with thorns. She is not one for the fainthearted!”